



**Illinois  
Department of Commerce  
& Economic Opportunity**

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**Contact**

Lyndsey Walters

[Lyndsey.Walters@Illinois.gov](mailto:Lyndsey.Walters@Illinois.gov)

## **Governor Bruce Rauner Proclaims Workforce Development Week**

SPRINGFIELD – Governor Bruce Rauner proclaimed this week, August 31 – September 6, 2015, Workforce Development Week in Illinois to highlight the vital role education and training play in helping Illinois residents prepare for in-demand careers, that provide employers with a skilled, qualified workforce to grow our state's economy. Workforce Development Week celebrates a new era of collaboration and coordination of federal, state and local resources and workforce development programs under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which went into effect July 1, 2015.

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity along with the Illinois Community College Board, Department of Employment Security, and Department of Human Services are leading efforts to modernize Illinois' workforce development system through WIOA. These agencies work with other state and local agencies to create career focused programs such as Illinois Pathways, a public-private partnership promoting STEM education.

"The people in Illinois are second to none," Department of Commerce Director Jim Schultz said. "A career-based, employer-driven workforce development system is vital to helping our residents reach their full potential, compete for 21<sup>st</sup> century jobs and build strong, productive careers, while growing our state's economy. I want to commend our Local Workforce Boards for all their hard work building a comprehensive and coordinated workforce development system in Illinois. "

Through a network of 22 local workforce areas, community based organizations, education and workforce providers come together to address the needs of dislocated workers and individuals with barriers to employment, including veterans, persons with disabilities, youth, and low-income individuals to connect them with employment and training opportunities that will help them achieve self-sufficiency and economic prosperity.

WIOA replaced the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and set national standards for modern workforce development efforts. This bipartisan legislation emphasizes an employer-driven approach through career pathway programs, integrated work-based education and training and the coordination of services. The act also expanded the role of Local Workforce Boards, to ensure workforce programs and services are aligned in a way that meets worker and employer needs.

Under the WIOA, state agencies, education partners and community-based organization come together through, the Local Workforce Boards to work with private employers on creating employer-focused strategies, to address their need for qualified workers and ensure participants are competitive in the job market.

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